

September is National Cholesterol Education Month

- Knowing the facts about cholesterol can help you improve your heart health and reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke
- Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in your body. In fact, it is needed for the body to function normally. Your body makes enough cholesterol for its needs. When there is too much cholesterol in your body, it is deposited in arteries, including those of the heart, which can lead to narrowing of the arteries and to heart disease.
- Cholesterol is carried in the blood in particles called lipoproteins. These particles are made up of cholesterol on the inside and protein on the outside.
- High blood cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States. About 17% of adult Americans have high blood cholesterol.
- High blood cholesterol itself does not cause symptoms, so many people may not know that their cholesterol level is too high. Simple blood tests can be done to check your total cholesterol levels and other types of fats in the blood.
- If it is found that your cholesterol is high, your doctor may prescribe various treatments depending on your risk for developing heart disease. These include lifestyle changes such as diet, weight control, and physical activity.
- Everyone can do something to keep cholesterol within the normal range. Your healthcare provider may prescribe certain drugs to manage your cholesterol. Lifestyle changes are usually still recommended with medications.
- Talk to your healthcare provider to learn about cholesterol.

The National Cholesterol Education Program recommends that adults have their cholesterol levels checked at least every 5 years.

Sources: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [American Heart Association](#), and the [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#)